



# Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities

*Celebrating 31 Years of Leadership & Advocacy*

[www.laccod.org](http://www.laccod.org)



## MEMBERS

Janet A. Neal  
Chair

Richard Krzyzanowski  
Vice Chair

Kecia Weller  
Treasurer

Mary Chambers  
Wan-Chun Chang  
Ernest T. Hamilton, Jr.  
Michael G. Gureckas  
Harley Rubenstein  
Bernard Siegel  
Alexia Teran  
John B. Troost  
Wendy Welt  
Sheila D. Wright

## MINUTES OF THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES

The regular meeting of the Los Angeles County Commission on Disabilities was held on Wednesday, April 18, 2007, at Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, Room 140 500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

### CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair Neal at 1:09 p.m. Introduction of Commissioners, staff and audience members followed.

### APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 21, 2007 MINUTES

On motion of Commissioner Welt, seconded by Commissioner Krzyzanowski, and unanimously carried, the minutes for the meeting of March 21, 2007 were approved with the following corrections:

Page 8 under MTA Report – Chip Hazen

. . .

Chair Neal thanked Mr. Hazen for his information and for appearing on the *Community Disability Forum Radio*.

### PUBLIC COMMENT

**Jan Matthews** reported that she is a single disabled woman who was injured while working for Pavilions when a falling object caused trauma to her head. Ms. Matthews shared her experiences resulting from the injury and solicited assistance from the Commission.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT (Cont.)**

**Linda Block** urged Commissioners and members of the audience to contact their respective Congressmen to express opposition to President Bush's Comprehensive Guest Worker Program (CGWP). Ms. Block expressed that if the CGWP is approved, programs such as the Social Security Income, Section 8 and Medi-cal could be burdened due to the use of these programs by undocumented individuals.

**Susie Boyette** representing the Los Angeles Music Center announced the upcoming 28<sup>th</sup> *Very Special Arts Festival* to be held on May 4, 2007 at the Music Center Plaza. The festival is a free public event where countywide schools come to showcase the talents of their students with disabilities. This year's theme is "Celebrating California Cultures – Shaping History."

(Commissioner Sheila Wright joined the meeting)

### **CHAIR'S REPORT**

#### *Appointment of Nomination Committee for 2007-2008 Officers*

Chair Neal reported on the process and timeline for the election of Officers for the 2007-2008 term and requested that Commissioners volunteer to serve on the Nominating Committee.

After discussion on motion of Commissioner Weller, seconded by Commissioner Krzyzanowski, and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the 2007-2008 Nominating Committee -- Commissioner Alexia Teran, representing the First District, John Troost, representing the Second District, and Commissioner Bud Seigel, representing the Third District. The Nominating Committee was instructed to elect a Chair for the Committee and to recruit a member to represent the Fourth District.

#### *Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Office of Women's Health Summit on May 24, 2007*

Chair Neal announced the 2007 Women's Health Policy Summit to be held at the Los Angeles Sheraton Hotel on May 24, 2007. This event is being sponsored by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Office of Women's Health and collaborating organizations.

Chair Neal was invited to be a workshop facilitator at the event. The workshop that Chair Neal will facilitate will target: 1) identifying the misconceptions related to the health needs of disabled women; 2) reducing barriers encountered by disabled women while accessing comprehensive healthcare; and 3) disabled women's' reproductive health.

*Update on Commissioner Ernest Hamilton*

Chair Neal reported that Commissioner Hamilton is very ill and is hospitalized in the VA Long Beach Hospital. She reported that Commissioner Hamilton called to inform her that, while hospitalized, the alarm on his respirator was not working properly; he was afraid and needed help. Chair Neal added that she reported the incident to the police and opened a case with Adult Protective Services. She offered a motion to write a letter to the VA Long Beach Hospital addressing the quality of care received by Commissioner Hamilton at this hospital. Commissioner Wright voiced her agreement with the letter; however, she recommended that the focus be on the "disabled" component because of the Commission's mission.

After discussion on motion of Commissioner Troost, seconded by Commissioner Weller, and unanimously carried, the Commission approved to write a letter to the VA Long Beach Hospital addressing the quality of care of disabled veterans at the Hospital.

Chair Neal informed the Commission that Commissioner Gurekas was also hospitalized at the VA Long Beach Hospital. "Get Well" cards for Commissioners Gurekas and Hamilton were distributed during the meeting for signature by Commissioners and members present.

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Commissioner Weller gave a report on the Commission Trust Fund account and reported that the current balance is \$24,902.53. Commissioner Weller commended Commission staff for their assistance with the financial statement.

## **STAFF REPORT**

Ms. Rosemary Osuna, Commission Staff, reported the following:

- Recruitment letters for nominees to the Bill Tainter Scholarships will be mailed out to high schools, countywide, within the next two weeks.
- Bill Tainter Scholarship Board Presentation/Reception date is tentatively scheduled for June. Date to be determined.
- The Quality and Productivity Commission is holding its 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Commissioners' Leadership Conference on Wednesday, May 23, 2007 at the Los Angeles Music Center. Commission Officers are invited to attend. An RSVP is needed as soon as possible, as availability is on a *"first come, first served"* basis. Invitations were given to Chair, Vice Chair, and Treasurer. The topic of the conference will be *"Leading Edge Leadership in Times of Change."*
- The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors is holding its 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Multicultural Conference on Wednesday and Thursday, May 16 and 17, 2007, at the Pasadena Conference Center. Registration fee before May 7 is \$120 for both days, which includes continental breakfast and lunch on the second day. The registration fee after May 7<sup>th</sup> is \$130 for both days and it is nonrefundable. Anyone interested, please contact Commission Staff.
- Declaration of Candidacy forms is due no later than May 5, 2007. Forms were distributed to Commissioners.

(Commissioner Rubenstein joined the meeting.)

**PRESENTATION BY MARIA GITOMER, LOS ANGELES PUBLIC  
AFFAIRS SPECIALIST, SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION**

*Overview of Social Security Disability, SSI and Medi-care*

Ms. Maria Gitomer, Public Affairs Specialist in Los Angeles for the Social Security Administration, gave an overview of the benefits and services administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA) and reported the following:

(Commissioner Chambers joined the meeting.)

**Financial Benefits**

- In order for an individual to receive benefits from the SSA, an individual must have a disability, or be the spouse or minor child of a person with a disability. The term “disability” for the SSA is defined as *a medical condition preventing substantial work for at least 12 months or expected to result in the death of an individual. Age, education and work experience, in addition to the disability itself, are considered when assessments are made.*
- There are two types of benefits that are administered by the SSA -- Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
- SSDI is a benefit that is given to individuals who have worked and earned credits for their service and contributed to the program by paying FICA Taxes. Although 40 credits are required to receive the benefit, when disabled, an individual can qualify for this benefit with less than 40 credits. Spouses and minor children are also paid benefits

- SSI is a benefit that is given to individuals who have low income and resources. This benefit does not require work credit. No benefits are given to the spouses or minor children. To receive an SSI benefit, an individual's resources must not exceed \$2000 or \$3000 for a couple and must have

monthly income of no more than \$856 or \$1035 for a couple. Resources excluded from the \$2000/\$3000 maximum include, a home that is a primary residence, one automobile, burial plot for the individual receiving the benefit or for a family member, and funds designated for burial expenses. Additionally, the individuals must be U.S citizens or qualified aliens.

- The application process for both SSDI and SSI are the same. Individuals can apply online or by calling 1-800-772-1213 to schedule an appointment. The medical decision to determine disability is made by the Disability Determination Services -- a state agency. Appeals may be filed by individuals who are denied benefits. A hearing is required for any appeal and reconsideration.

#### Health Care Benefits

- Medicare is the health insurance benefit for individuals age 65 or older, has received SSDI benefits for at least 24 months; have permanent Kidney failure, or are diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis. SSA does not administer health care. The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services is the agency that administers the health care benefits.

There are three layers of Medicare coverage. Part A (Hospital Insurance) which covers most inpatient hospital expenses. This year's deductible is \$992.00 and has no monthly premiums. Part B (Supplemental Medical Insurance) covers 80% of outpatient expenses. This year's deductible is \$131.00 with a premium of \$93.50 each month. Part D (Prescription Drug Benefit) is administered by private plans and premiums vary depending on the plan elected by

an individual.

- Medi-Cal is coverage that is automatically given to individuals who qualify for SSI. Costs for hospitalization, outpatient services and prescriptions are paid by Medi-Cal.

After a question and answer forum, Ms. Gitomer reported that additional information on the benefits administered by the Social Security Administration may be obtained by contacting 1-800-772-1213 or by accessing information at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov). Ms. Gitomer distributed pamphlets from the Social Security Administration.

Chair Neal thanked Ms. Gitomer and requested her to return at a future Commission meeting to bring more information about benefits under the Social Security Administration.

### **PRESENTATION BY JESSICA PAUL MARTINEZ, PATIENTS RIGHTS ADVOCATE**

Ms. Jessica Paul Martinez reported that she is a Patients Rights Advocate employed by the Department of Mental Health and an individual who has suffered with a psychiatric disability for over 20 years.

Ms. Martinez further expressed that County employees do not pay into State Disability Insurance, and therefore, cannot apply for such in the event a person becomes disabled due to a psychiatric illness. Her concern is that County employees are not covered by most insurance companies that contract with the County because not many companies cover psychiatric disabilities. Ms. Martinez reported that *Assurant* offers this type of coverage.

She asked the Commission to write a letter to the Board of Supervisors requesting the Board to not contract with disability insurances that do not cover individuals who suffer with this type of disability.

Commissioner Seigel offered to place the aforementioned motion at a future meeting for approval. Commissioner Wright suggested that before the Commission takes a position on the issue, the Commission seek County Counsel advice.

Therefore, by common consent and there being no objection, the Commission continued Ms. Martinez's request to May 16, 2007 for further discussion and action by the Commission.

## **PRESENTATION BY RAY LAMPKIN, DEPUTY CHIEF DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

### ***Statistics on the Confiscation of Placards***

Due to a conflict in schedules, Deputy Chief Ray Lampkin was unable to attend this meeting.

Lieutenant Kenny Hill, Special Operation Lieutenant and Captain Susan Hicks, Chief of Special Operations gave a presentation on placard enforcement and the confiscation unit and reported the following:

- In the past years the unit has issued approximately 3,649 citations annually.
- The department is experiencing reorganization and staff will return to full implementation of parking placard enforcement and confiscation.

Lieutenant Hill can be reached at 323-224-6588 or [kenneth.hill@lacity.org](mailto:kenneth.hill@lacity.org); Captain Susan Hicks can be reached at 213-972-4941 or [susan.hicks@lacity.org](mailto:susan.hicks@lacity.org).

Chair Neal reported that she received information from Larry Albers about Handyplate Inc. which she will share with LADOT. The City of Sarasota, Florida has a Disability Board that is funded by revenue generated by the sale of license plates.

Captain Hicks provided the following numbers:

- 213-485-4184 (24-Hour Hotline for Parking Enforcement)
- 213-485-6334 (Disabled Parking Curbside Painting)



## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Executive Committee**

#### *Approval of the New Otani as Venue for the 2007 Access Awards Luncheon*

On motion of Commissioner Krzyzanowski, seconded by Commissioner Weller and unanimously carried, the Commission approved the New Otani as the venue for the 2007 Access Awards Luncheon pending approval of the Executive

Committee after a site visit.

#### *Bill Tainter Scholarship Grants*

Letters to high schools, countywide, recruiting nominees to receive the Bill Tainter Scholarships, will be sent out approximately the last 2 weeks of April. The amount of the grants will be \$2000.

#### *Community Service Committee*

Chair Neal reported that the particulars of the Community Service Committee will be discussed at the next Executive Committee meeting and a report will be given at the next Commission meeting. Commissioner Krzyzanowski discussed the feasibility of conducting a teleconference meeting for the Executive Committee meeting allowing more participation by Commissioners. Staff will look into this possibility and discuss with commission.

### **Public Relations Committee**

Commissioner Krzyzanowski added the following:

- The Commission was unable to secure a literature table at the Los Angeles County Annual Multicultural Conference to be held in May 2006; however, Commissioner Krzyzanowski will participate and deliver our literature at the event. This conference is a two-day Conference and will provide for a great public outreach.
- He will join Commissioner Teran at the Cypress Park Community Festival event on May 12, 2007.

- The Department of Mental Health will host the Hope and Recovery Conferences in June. He will participate in that event representing the Commission.
- He invited Commissioners to join him at these events.
- He received many calls from the Korean Community requesting information on mental health services.

### **Transportation Committee**

*ASI Report – Teddie Joy Remhild*  
*City of Los Angeles, City Ride Program*  
*MTA Report – Chip Hazen*

None. Items were deferred to the meeting in May.

### **KURT HAGAN, ADA 504 COMPLIANCE OFFICER, REPORT**

None.

### **LEGISLATION**

Commissioner Krzyzanowski informed the Commission that he is involved in a Legislative Committee at an Independent Living Center.

### **DISCUSSION ON THE MISSION STATEMENT**

The Commission discussed the feasibility of developing and including on Commission literature a mission statement. Commissioner Welt informed the Commission that a mission statement was formerly developed and offered to look through her files and give the Commission the language of the Commission's mission statement.

### **ITEMS NOT POSTED FOR CONSIDERATION ON A FUTURE AGENDA**

Commissioner Chambers requested that the Commission place on a future agenda Congressmen Langevin and Ramstad's proposal to introduce forthcoming legislation that would eliminate Medicare's "in the home" restriction. The "in the home" rule currently restricts coverage of mobility devices to only those needed for certain in-home activities. Endorsing Congressmen Langevin and Ramstad's proposal would eliminate the "in the home" restriction and extend coverage for devices used outside of the home.

Commissioner Rubenstein offered to work with staff to bring to the Commission more information on this piece of forthcoming legislation.

Commissioner Chambers requested that the Public Relations Committee prepare a draft report on the Commission's accomplishments. After discussion, on motion of Commissioner Chambers, seconded by Commissioner Wright, the Commissioner instructed the Public Relations

Commission to draft a report of the Commission's accomplishments. Commissioner Wright requested that no more than two presenters be placed on the agenda to allow for a question and answer forum without a time constriction.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Commissioner Welt reported that she is working on a project that will construct a gymnasium for disabled citizens and would like to invite the Executive Director of this project to address the Commission at a future meeting.

Alexia Teran announced that the City of Cypress is holding a public event at Cypress Park on May 12, 2007. Commissioner Krzyzanowski will have an information/literature table for the Commission. An invitation was extended to the Commission.

Commissioner Krzyzanowski announced that the California Association of Mental Health Patients' Rights Advocate appointed him as Vice President for the Association on April 4, 2007.

Commissioner Rubenstein announced his visit to Commissioner Hamilton at the VA Long Beach Hospital.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, on motion of Commissioner Krzyzanowski, seconded by Commissioner Welt, and unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 3:33 p.m.

## **ATTENDANCE**

### **Present**

Janet A. Neal, Chair  
Richard Krzyzanowski, Vice-Chair  
Mary Chambers  
Alexia Teran  
John Troost  
Harley Rubenstein  
Bernard Siegel  
Kecia Weller  
Wendy Welt  
Sheila Wright

### **Excused Absence**

Michael Gureckas  
Ernest Hamilton  
Wan-Chun Chang

### **Board of Supervisors**

Rosemary Osuna, Staff  
Martha Arana, Staff  
Audra Galang, Staff

### **County of Los Angeles**

Carlton Lindo, Consumer Affairs  
Royce Crowder, Sheriff's Department  
Jessica Paul Martinez, Patient Rights Advocate  
Department of Mental Health

### **Guests**

Maria Gitomer, Social Security Administration  
Gary Gonzalez, Social Security Administration  
Suzy Boyett, Los Angeles Music Center  
Joanne Jaimes, Total Recall Captioning Services  
Pilar Marsh, Life Signs  
Laura B Ripplinger, Life Signs.  
Magda Carrero, Eastern Los Angeles Regional Center  
Donna Pomerantz, Accessibility and Disability Commission  
Susan Hicks, Los Angeles City Department of Transportation  
Kenneth Hill, Los Angeles City Department of Transportation  
Susan Susman  
Carolyn McDow  
Jan Matthews  
Donna Daugherty